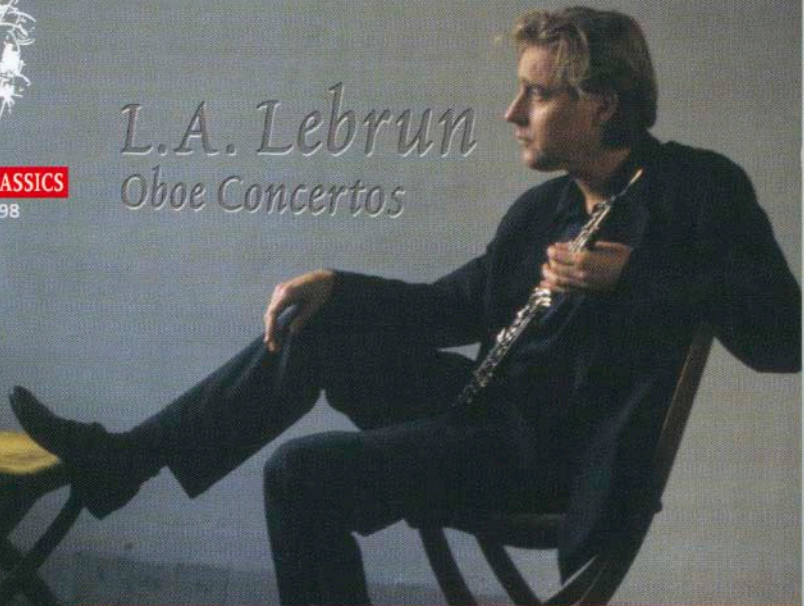




CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 16198

L.A. Lebrun
Oboe Concertos



BART SCHNEEMANN

Radio Chamber Orchestra

Jan Willem de Vriend conductor

Ludwig August Lebrun (1752-1790)
Oboe Concertos

Bart Schneemann **oboe**
Radio Chamber Orchestra
Jan Willem de Vriend **conductor**



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 16198

Concerto no. 1 in D minor

1	Allegro	8.37
2	Grazioso	4.47
3	Rondo Allegro	5.18

Concerto no. 4 in B flat

4	Allegro	8.22
5	Adagio	5.05
6	Rondo Allegro	5.25

Concerto nr. 2 in G minor

7	Allegro	7.44
8	Adagio	5.46
9	Rondo Allegro	6.56

Total time 58.50

© & © 2001

Production & Distribution

CHANNEL CLASSICS

RECORDS BV

Waalwijk 76

4171 CG Herwijnen

The Netherlands

Phone (+31.418) 58 18 00

Fax (+31.418) 58 17 82

E-mail

clubchannel@channel.nl

P.O. Box 5642

Englewood New Jersey 07631

U.S.A.

Phone (+1.201) 568 1544

Fax (+1.201) 568 6146

More information about
our releases can be found
on the WWW:
www.channelclassics.com

Made in Germany

Oboe built by F. Lorée Cadenzas Bart Schneemann

Six
Sonnetos
pour le

Hautbois.
composés par

Le Grand
1^{er} Numéro.

N^o 1845



Paris 2-45.26.

A. OFFENBACH & Co.,
chez Jean André.

Bart Schneemann was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1954. He completed his studies in The Netherlands with Han de Vries in 1977. His early gained orchestra experience led to his appointment as principal oboist of the celebrated Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (chief conductor Valery Gergiev). He held this position until 1996 when he decided to focus on building a career as a soloist. As music director, he restyled and increased the artistic range and possibilities of the Netherlands Wind Ensemble which is recognized as being one of the best wind ensembles in the world. With them he concertizes and records extensively and they commission a large quantity of composers to write works especially for them. Bart Schneemann is a master in various fields of music. This fact, among other aspects, made him the unanimous winner of the prestigious 3M Music Laureate Prize in 1991. From 1995 - apart from playing his modern instrument - he started to play his baroque oboe more and more and started to rethink his way of playing the vast baroque oboe repertoire. He is now equally comfortable on both instruments.

Apart from playing the standard repertoire, he plays a huge amount of contemporary works. his virtuoso and musically sensitive playing has attracted the attention of many first rate contemporary composers. Several of them have written works especially for him including Tristan Keuris, Wolfgang Rihm, John Zorn, Theo Verbey, Giia Kantcheli and Kevin Volans. Bart has performed as a soloist with conductors like Valery Gergiev, Edo de Waart, Hartmut Haenchen, Ernest Blour, Lev Markiz, Frans Brüggen, Roy Goodman and Ton Koopman. Apart from playing, he holds the position of oboe professor at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

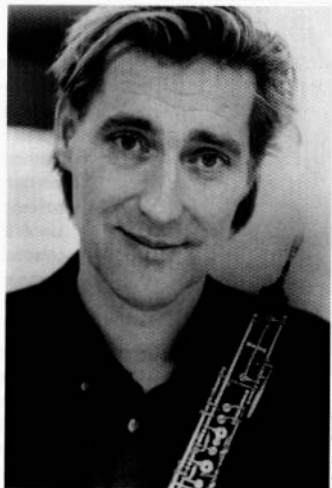


photo: Co Broerse



Jan Willem de Vriend is founder and musical director of 'Combattimento Consort Amsterdam', an orchestra specialising in 17th and 18th century music. Operas of Monteverdi, Purcell, Handel and Rameau were realised in The Netherlands, USA and Switzerland. The ensemble works with choirs like Collegium Vocale Gent and the Netherlands Chamber Choir. Many cd's and recordings for radio and television were made worldwide of the ensemble.

Jan Willem de Vriend has been appointed principal guest conductor by the New Sinfonietta Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Bach Soloists, Concerto Armenico in Freiburg and the RIAS Chamber Orchestra in Berlin. Furthermore he has conducted the Radio Chamber Orchestra, Die

Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, The Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, The Brabants Orchestra and the North Netherlands Orchestra.

The **Radio Chamber Orchestra (RKO)**, a classical orchestra consisting of 39 musicians, constitutes the basis of an ensemble which can be reduced or expanded depending on the requirements of the scores. This flexibility of size is particularly important for modern music, since it gives composers more possibilities in their choice of instruments than would an eighteenth-century orchestral make-up. This approach allows the Radio Chamber Orchestra to perform a repertoire covering more than three centuries.

The Radio Chamber Orchestra is internationally noted for its interpretations of modern music, having given first performances of several works by living composers both from the Netherlands and elsewhere. As a result of this reputation the orchestra regularly performs in European Festivals of modern music. In addition, the orchestra is intensively active in performing the classical repertoire.

'AS SWEET AS DROPS OF NECTAR'

Ludwig August Lebrun, a contemporary of Mozart's, worshipped throughout Europe, brilliant oboist and composer of oboe concerti which, in the second half of the 18th century, must have been experienced as spectacular and pioneering.....and you've probably never even heard of him! I'll tell you how it happened with me: of course, I could have taken Mozart's over-familiar oboe concerto off the shelf again. Of course it's a beautiful piece, but there's some question whether Mozart actually wrote it, and to be honest, I had a VERY strong feeling that it wasn't the first time that I'd "taken off the shelf". Well, then, how about yet another search for that F major oboe concerto by Beethoven? We know that Beethoven wrote an oboe concerto, but that's all we know: the manuscript is either very far away in some obscure library, or it has simply been lost.

And so there is nothing to do but go and look for that unknown jewel written by that unfamiliar composer, and by the way, it's no simple task, given that there weren't a whole lot of brilliant pieces written for the oboe in the second half of the 18th century. As a matter of fact, the oboe's stock was going through a minor recession: because of all the changes in the demands on color and expression made at that time, the oboe was at a disadvantage. Concert halls were becoming larger, and orchestras were expected to put out more decibels: 4 first violins became 6, 6 first violins became 8. Eight first violins became 10, and let's not even talk about the second violins, violas, and basses! But in the back row of the orchestra there was still one lonely oboe, one flute, and one bassoon who all had to stand up against that big army of strings: and so there was a lot of experimentation with the bore of the wind instruments in order to achieve a higher tuning and a larger volume. You can guess the results: not many brilliant solo oboists around. And a lack of virtuoso oboists meant, in turn, that nothing much in the way of high-quality oboe concerti was being written: in a period where individualism and thus virtuosity is becoming more and more important, composers depend upon the availability of such virtuosi.

With all these thoughts in the back of my mind, I was quite surprised when I got a look at the first edition (1845) of Lebrun's oboe concerti (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale). What

virtuosity, but above all what imagination and richness of invention! I set out to find more information on Lebrun. And as I read I became happier and happier: as a matter of fact it all began with that enthusiastic prince, Karl Theodor, prince of Mannheim. Now, Karl Theodor was one of those rulers whose heart was in the right place: in addition to his social conscience, he had an insatiable desire to create a climate in Mannheim in which the arts could flourish. And that's exactly what happened: the orchestra of Mannheim became an orchestra unequalled throughout Europe for its quality and innovating spirit: "its forte is a roll of thunder, its crescendo is a waterfall, its diminuendo a tinkling flow of distant crystal waters, its piano a whisper of spring." (Christian Friedrich Schubart in his 'Idea for an aesthetic of composition', 1784)

Since then, the 'Mannheim School' has been synonymous with a style of music making and composing which paved the way for the Classical period.

Ludwig August Lebrun grew up in that same stimulating musical climate: he was born in 1752, the son of an oboist, Jacob Alexander Lebrun, who originally came from France. At the age of 15, the young Lebrun was taken on as an oboist by the Mannheimer court orchestra, and from then on, his life, as far as we know, was one continuous success story: his star rose steadily, and within a few years he had become the virtuoso oboist of Europe. He traveled as a soloist throughout Europe, accompanied by vociferous applause: at first alone, and then with his wife, Franziska Danzi, the Maria Callas of the 18th century. The historian Charles Burney, another reporter of the period: "Franziska Danzi and the excellent oboist Lebrun usually travel together, and it seems as though she has listened to nothing other than his instrument, for when they perform together in thirds and sixths one cannot hear which is the upper or the lower voice!"

But what concerti did Lebrun play to win the hearts of his audiences? Mozart and Beethoven had not yet composed their concerti, and there weren't many other alternatives. And so Lebrun wrote them himself: 14 oboe concerti and a number of works for oboe and soprano. In essence, they were all for his own use. They exhibit all the innovations of the Mannheim school:

- Liberal use of dynamic effects: crescendi and diminuendi extending over many measures,

fortepianos, accents, sudden loud entrances of the orchestra in contrast to the vulnerable little oboe (musical techniques which, today, might not seem very striking, but which must have been a sensation for an audience in the second half of the 18th century, accustomed to the late baroque style).

- The 'Mannheimer Rocket': a powerful ascending arpeggio.
- The liberal use of the 'Seufzer' (a 'sighing' appoggiatura) and the 'Mannheimer Tremolo' (oscillation around a single note): not as an ornament but as an important element of the melody and musical narrative.
- 'The Roller' (let's just call this a steamroller): a melody or motive continuously repeated, each time a step higher and a degree louder, while the bass stubbornly continues with what it was playing before, immovably on a single tone (but meanwhile all the parts whip each other up with that tremendous crescendo!).
- The construction of a theme in 'masculine' and 'feminine' segments: this can be clearly heard in the opening of the g minor concerto. The first part of the theme is somewhat brusque, but despite the minor tonality it is unmistakably decisive and optimistic. The second part (from the 4th measure on) is full of feeling and delicacy. At the conclusion of this theme, there seems to be a feeling of tension between the two elements, but ultimately it is all resolved.
- Last but not least: 'the conquest of the bow', or 'the attempt never to have to breathe again'. In other words, the playing of a long line, a long, beautiful melody, without having to take account of the limitations of the instrument (Schubart: "Lebrun is the first oboist who can reach the high F, and not just reach it but play it beautifully!"). The audience of that period wanted to be able to identify with the individual players. The Mannheim orchestra and its individual players wanted to let them hear how good and creative they were....in combination, that meant that boundaries were always being expanded. The instrumental possibilities and the possibilities of the player were paramount: the more virtuosic, the more innovative, but also the more sensitive and profound the composition and performer, the better.

The concerti of Lebrun are, in every respect, a mirror of that period: Delicate melodies, spectacular technical stunts, music filled with imagination, depth, humor, and unexpected turns of phrase. When I was studying them, and later recording them, I saw more and more clearly a picture of a man who had always had his way: in spite of a number of unmistakably dramatic moments, his music radiates most strongly a feeling of optimism and the joy of existence.

To quote Schubart yet once again: "Lebrun is a veritable wizard on the oboe, and his compositions are particularly sensitive and as sweet as drops of nectar. The ethereal radiance of his genius finds expression in everything that he composes and performs. He is worth of all Europe's admiration!"

Lebrun died in 1790 at the age of 38, followed three months later by his wife.

Translation: David Shapero

colophon

Production
Producer, recording engineer, editing
Cover photo
Cover design
Liner notes

Technical information
Microphones
Digital converter
Recording location

Recording date

Oboe by F. Lorée, Paris
Cadenzas: Bart Schneemann

Channel Classics Records by
C. Jared Sacks
Camilla van Zuylen
David Louf, Utrecht
Bart Schneemann

Bruel & Kjaer 4003, Schoeps
24 Bit Prism / Genex Recorder
Concert Hall Vredenburg, Utrecht,
The Netherlands
June 1999

discography



CCS 14098
Telemann Trio Sonatas

(...) his sense of line is excellent and shape, direction and detail are evident. (...) For a musically-illuminating performance of music for a Baroque trio, this CD is an important release.(...) ..the trio's playing is of such a high quality that lovers of Baroque chamber music cannot overlook it.

Music Teachers (www)

(...) He touches the listener in the depths of the soul...in the fast movements there is the elasticity of a shuttlecock which never touches the ground. In short, a delightful cd.

Klassieke Zaken